

A
S E R M O N
ON THE
AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE,

PREACHED AT

MAZE-POND, SOUTHWARK,

LORD'S DAY AFTERNOON,

Nov. 30, 1788.

By JAMES DORE.



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WALWORTH, Dec. 19, 1788.

A

S E R M O N

O N T H E

A F R I C A N S L A V E T R A D E.

THE Church, whom I have the honour to serve, have desired me to take the African Slave Trade for my subject, this afternoon : a subject which, of late, has excited general concern : a subject on which much has been written by many masterly pens : a subject submitted to the political investigation of the British Parliament ; to which their attention has been invited by petitions from every part of the nation.

The words I have selected for my text you may find—EZEKIEL xxvii. 13.

——THEY TRADED THE PERSONS
OF MEN.——

These words are, I apprehend, by no means foreign to our present design. We will consider them first in their connexion ; and then as descriptive of that inhuman branch of commerce which has been long maintained on the coast of Africa.

We will first consider the text in its connexion. By attending to the context, you will perceive that the words before us respect the inhabitants of Tyre ; who, among various other branches of commerce, ‘ traded the persons of men.’

The history of Tyre is fruitful of important instruction. A serious consideration of its PROSPERITY, its VICES, and its PUNISHMENT would suggest many interesting lessons. You cannot, however, expect from me a very circumstantial account of that once flourishing, but now ruined city : but a brief description I will endeavour to give you, that we may see the fluctuation of human affairs—perceive the divinity of revelation shining through the prophecies—and learn that national crimes are productive of national judgments.

Tyre,

Tyre, you know, was a city of Phœnicia, built partly on the continent, and partly on an isle almost over against it, called the Old and New Tyre. It appears from sacred and prophane history, that Tyre was a very ancient city. In the days of Joshua it was described as a ‘strong city*,’ and Isaiah speaks of its ‘anti-quity as of ancient days’†. But, ancient as it was, he calls it ‘the daughter of Sidon’‡: for the Sidonians, being besieged by the king of Ascalon, went in ships and built Tyre: but the daughter soon surpassed the mother city in extent, power and riches, and became the most celebrated place in the world for its trade and navigation. Tyre was the seat of commerce and the centre of riches. Isaiah says, ‘The harvest of the river is her revenue: that she is the mart of nations§: that she is the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, and her traffickers the honourable of the earth.’|| And

* Josh. xix. 29. † Isai. xxiii. 7. ‡ Ver. 12.
§ Ver. 3. || Chap. xxiii. 8.

And the chapter from whence our text is taken, recounts the various nations whose commodities were brought to Tyre, and bought and sold by the Tyrians.

The situation of Tyre, which was favourable to trade, concurred with the industry of its inhabitants to elevate it to the empire of the seas, and to render it the centre of commerce. From the utmost bounds of Arabia, Persia, and India, to the most western coasts ; from Scythia and the northern regions, to Egypt, Æthiopia, and the southern climes ;—all nations contributed to accumulate its wealth, increase its power, and augment its glory. Not only the necessaries and conveniences, but the elegancies, the luxuries, of life, were brought to its markets, and from thence dispersed over all countries.

Such was the PROSPERITY of Tyre : let us now reflect on the VICES of the Tyrians ; their *pride*, their *luxury*, and their *cruelty*.

Prosperity is too apt to flatter the vanity of men, and fill their little minds with *pride*. The history of Tyre verifies this
remark.

remark. A series of prosperity swelled her pride*. ‘ She delighted to consider herself as the queen of cities ; a queen whose head is adorned with a diadem ; whose correspondents are illustrious princes ; whose rich traders dispute sovereignty with kings ; who sees every maritime power, either as her allies or dependents ; and who made herself necessary or formidable to all nations.’—‘ She was puffed up with the glory of possessing the empire of the sea ; of being the seat of universal commerce ; of giving birth to the most famous colonies ; of having within her walls merchants, whose credit, riches and splendor, equalled them to the princes of the earth†.’

As an extensive and beneficial trade excites pride, it procures *luxury*. The luxury of the Tyrians, and the pompous display of their grandeur, the prophet Ezekiel particularly describes in this chapter.

Another vice with which they stand charged in the book of God, is *cruelty* ; which

* Isaiah xxiii. 8. Ezek. xxvii. 3. and xxviii. 2.

† Rollin's Ancient History, Vol. iv. p. 442.

was strikingly exemplified, First, in the insulting, taunting manner in which they treated the Jewish nation after they were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar. ‘ Ty-
 ‘ rus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she
 ‘ is broken that was the gates of the peo-
 ‘ ple: she is turned unto me; I shall be
 ‘ replenished now she is laid waste.’* And,
 Secondly, in buying and selling the chil-
 dren of Israel, like cattle in their markets.
 ‘ The children also of Judah, and the
 ‘ children of Jerusalem have ye SOLD un-
 ‘ to the Grecians, that ye might remove
 ‘ them far from their border†. They de-
 ‘ livered up the whole captivity to Edom,
 ‘ and remembered not the brotherly cove-
 ‘ nant‡: i. e. the friendly alliance for-
 merly entered into between Hiram king
 of Tyre and David; and afterward be-
 tween Hiram and Solomon.—Our text
 likewise informs us, that ‘ they traded
 ‘ the persons of men,’ whom they bought
 of JAVAN, the Grecians; TUBAL, the Ibe-
 ri and Albanians; and MESHECH, the Cap-

* Ezek. xxvi. 2. † Joel iii. 6. ‡ Amos i. 9.

padocians. These merchants bought men and women, in the several countries to which they belonged, or where they traded, and brought them to Tyre, and sold them for slaves. The Ionian and Grecian slaves were held in great estimation at their markets.*

For these vices of the Tyrians the anger of the Lord was kindled against them, and at sundry times, and by divers prophets, he proclaimed their DESTRUCTION. ‘ Thus saith the LORD: For three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant; but I will send a fire on the wall of Tyrus, which shall devour the palaces thereof†.’ Isaiah says ‡, ‘ The LORD of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.’—‘ Son of man,

* Pool Synop. Crit. in loc. † Amos i. 9, 10.

‡ Isa. xxiii. 9.

‘ say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus
 ‘ saith the Lord God : Because thine
 ‘ heart is lifted up, and thou hast said,
 ‘ I am a God, I sit in the seat of God
 ‘ in the midst of the seas—therefore be-
 ‘ hold, I will bring strangers upon thee,
 ‘ the terrible of the nations: and they
 ‘ shall draw their swords against the beau-
 ‘ ty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile
 ‘ thy brightness. They shall bring thee
 ‘ down to the pit, and thou shalt die the
 ‘ deaths of them that are slain in the midst
 ‘ of the seas *.—Son of man, Because that
 ‘ Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha,
 ‘ she is broken—therefore thus saith the
 ‘ Lord God; Behold I am against thee,
 ‘ O Tyrus, and will cause many nations
 ‘ to come up against thee, as the sea
 ‘ causeth his waves to come up †.’ Once
 more: ‘ What have ye to do with me, O
 ‘ Tyre and Sidon, and all the coast of
 ‘ Palestine? will ye render me a recom-
 ‘ pense? and if ye recompense me, swift-
 ‘ ly and speedily will I return your re-

* Ezek. xxviii. 2. † Ezek. xxvi. 2.

‘ compenſe upon your own head; Be-
 ‘ cauſe ye have taken my ſilver and my
 ‘ gold, and have carried into your temples
 ‘ my goodly pleaſant things: The chil-
 ‘ dren alſo of Judah, and the children
 ‘ of Jeruſalem have ye SOLD unto the
 ‘ Grecians, that ye might remove them
 ‘ far from their border. Behold, I will
 ‘ raiſe them out of the place whither ye
 ‘ have ſold them, and will return your
 ‘ recompenſe upon your own head: And
 ‘ I will SELL your ſons and your daugh-
 ‘ ters into the hand of the children of
 ‘ Judah, and they ſhall ſell them to the
 ‘ Sabeans, to a people far off: for the
 ‘ LORD hath ſpoken it.—Proclaim ye this
 ‘ among the Gentiles *.’

If you collect the various denuncia-
 tions of divine vengeance againſt Tyre,
 you will perceive that they refer to diffe-
 rent events, which were accompliſhed at
 different periods. Firſt, Tyre was to be
 taken and deſtroyed by Nebuchadnezzar
 and the Chaldæans†: afterward it was to

* Joel iii. 5—9. † Iſai. xxiii. 13. Ezek. xxvi.
 7—11. xxix. 18, 19, &c.

be destroyed by fire*: and finally, after having seen more glorious days, it was to be totally ruined†.

The light of history irradiates the prophecies. History informs us, that, soon after the destruction of Jerufalem, Nebuchadnezzar befieged Tyre thirteen years, when Ithobal was upon the throne.

About two hundred and fifty years after this, Alexander in his career of glory, or, shall I fay, of infamy?—having gained the battle of the Granicus, and reduced all the provinces of Leffer Asia, attacked Tyre, where he met with vigorous refiftance. But, animated by an unbounded ambition, he persevered till he triumphed over every obftacle, and ftormed the city. Seven months unwearied afiduity enabled him to form, with the ruins of the old city, a bank or caufey, from the continent to the ifland, by means of which he took the new city Tyre, which he commanded to be fet on fire, agreeably to the prediction of Ezekiel.

* Ezek. xxviii. 18. Amos i. 10. † Ezek. xxvi. 3—5. 14. 21.

In storming and taking the city eight thousand were slain: they who survived, and had not escaped to Carthage, were reserved for a more cruel destiny: two thousand were crucified, and THIRTY THOUSAND SOLD FOR SLAVES. They had before ‘traded the persons of men,’ and now the scene is changed, and they are sold as captives. Thus the prophecy of Joel is literally fulfilled.

A few years after Tyre rose, like the fabulous Phoenix from the ashes, and again saw happy days: but at last it was totally ruined, and became a place for fishers to spread their nets upon, as Ezekiel predicted. Maundrell, in his journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem *, speaking of Tyre, has these remarkable words. ‘This city, standing in the sea upon a peninsula, promises at a distance something very magnificent. But when you come to it, you find no similitude of that glory, for which it was so renowned in ancient times, and which the prophet Ezekiel

* P. 48, 49. 3d Edit.

describes.* On the north side it has an old Turkish ungarrisoned castle; besides which you see nothing here, but a mere Babel of broken walls, pillars, vaults, &c. there being not so much as one entire house left. Its present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches, harbouring themselves in the vaults, and subsisting chiefly upon fishing; who seem to be preserved in this place by divine providence, as a visible argument how God has fulfilled his word concerning Tyre, viz. ‘That it should be as the top of a rock, a place for fishers to dry their nets on†.’

Let us now pause a moment, and reflect on the vicissitudes of time. Of the changing scenes of Tyre we have already spoken; and, were it necessary, we might remind you of many other cities and empires, whose glory is no more. The empires of the world, those which are founded on the most solid basis, and regulated by the most consummate po-

* Ezek. xxvi. xxvii. xxviii. † Ezek. xxvi. 14.

licy, are subject to mutation. History informs us of many famous cities, and flourishing kingdoms that were shaken to their centre, and hurried to destruction. NINEVEH, that great city, is no more. ' BABYLON the great is fallen, is fallen. ' The glory of kingdoms, the beauty of ' the Chaldees excellency is as when God ' overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. The venerable ruins of PALMYRA proclaim its glory is departed. Where are now many other cities which once flourished? where are now many mighty empires which were once illustrious? The Egyptians, the Persians, the Assyrians, the Greeks, and the Romans who excelled them all, where are they? How affecting are the changes which Africa has experienced! That very country, which once could boast the most eminent writers, and where Christian churches flourished, is now, comparatively, a wilderness!—The changes which have taken place in our own country, though more happy, are not less remarkable. Before the Christian æra, the inhabitants of these kingdoms were as uncultivated as
 the

the savages of Africa at this present time. While we rejoice in our prosperity, let us not forget that prosperity is fluctuating *.

Let

* ‘ Trade is a fluctuating thing: it passed from
 ‘ Tyre to Alexandria, from Alexandria to Venice,
 ‘ from Venice to Antwerp, from Antwerp to Am-
 ‘ sterdam and London, the English rivalling the
 ‘ Dutch, as the French are now rivalling both. All
 ‘ nations almost are wisely applying themselves to
 ‘ trade; and it behoves those who are in possession
 ‘ of it, to take the greatest care that they do not lose
 ‘ it. It is a plant of tender growth, and requires
 ‘ sun, and soil, and fine seasons, to make it thrive and
 ‘ flourish. It will not grow like the palm tree,
 ‘ which with the more weight and pressure rises the
 ‘ more. Liberty is a friend to that, as that is a
 ‘ friend to liberty. But the greatest enemy to both
 ‘ is licentiousness, which tramples upon all law and
 ‘ lawful authority, encourages riots and tumults, pro-
 ‘ motes drunkenness and debauchery, sticks at no-
 ‘ thing to supply its extravagance, practises every art
 ‘ of illicit gain, ruins credit, ruins trade, and will in
 ‘ the end ruin liberty itself. Neither kingdoms nor com-
 ‘ monwealths, neither public companies nor private
 ‘ persons, can long carry on a beneficial flourishing
 ‘ trade without virtue, and what virtue teacheth, so-
 ‘ briety, industry, frugality, modesty, honesty, punc-
 ‘ tuality, humanity, charity, the love of our country,
 ‘ and

Let us learn from the history before us the divinity of scripture. Ezekiel foretold, several years before it came to pass, that Tyre would be taken by Nebuchadnezzar; an event which Isaiah had predicted above an hundred years before. That Tyre would be destroyed by Alexander, was foretold, several centuries previous to the event, by the prophets Joel, Amos, Isaiah, and Ezekiel. According to the common chronology of our Bible, Joel prophesied about eight hundred years before Christ, and Alexander conquered Tyre in the three hundred and thirty-second year before Christ; consequently Joel foretold, about four hundred and seventy-eight years before the fatal period, that the Tyrians would be sold for slaves: and the present desolate state of Tyre was foretold much longer before it came to pass. Events so remote could not have been foretold by the utmost exertion of finite intellects. Prescience of fu-

‘ and the fear of God. The prophets will inform
 ‘ us how the Tyrians lost it; and the like causes will
 ‘ always produce the like effects.’ Dr. Newton on
 the Prophecies, Vol. I. p. 322. 7th edit.

ture events is a prerogative peculiar to Deity. Holy men in predicting the destiny of nations, spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. "Prophecy is a permanent miracle on earth: a voice which speaks from Heaven, and proclaims its author to all nations and ages*." Prophecy, the light of which shineth more and more, is a striking evidence of the divinity of scripture.

We remark in the last place, that national sins are productive of national judgments. The sins of nations often introduce a train of calamities by way of natural consequence: and sometimes the hand of God more immediately appears changing the scenes of empire, and ordering and disposing all events. The calamities in which Tyre was involved were brought upon them, by the Governor of nations, to punish their wickedness in general, and in particular their cruelty in trading 'the persons of men.'

Would to God the practice of trading the 'persons of men' had been confined

* Dr. Rutherford's View of Anc. His.

to Tyre! Would to God that we had not to reproach ourselves with a traffic, so unjust in its nature, so sinful in its cause, so dreadful in its effects! But, alas! the page of British history has been long sullied with this disgraceful commerce; a commerce which shocks the feelings of humanity; a commerce inconsistent with the genius of our excellent civil constitution; a commerce inimical to the spirit of the gospel.—The very idea of trading the persons of men should kindle detestation in the breasts of MEN—especially of BRITONS—and above all of CHRISTIANS.

I. You are MEN: respect humanity. Whatever is human should interest your feelings. Consult your feelings, and let them speak. Listen to your reason, and let that plead the cause of the oppressed Africans.

Are not men naturally equal? ‘The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all.’ Look a few years, a few centuries back, and view the undistinguished dust out of which were formed the prince upon the throne,

and the peasant in the cottage ; the proud European Lord, and the poor Negro slave ; and let this prospect mortify the pride of birth, and interest the African in your regard. ‘ Have we not all one Father ?’ Is not God the maker of us all ? Did we not all spring from one common stock ? We all took our rise from Adam : we all descended from Noah : we are all brothers and sisters, members of one great family. Let us ‘ love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.’

Are not men naturally free ? Is not liberty the gift of God to every man ? And can we trample on the sacred rights of the human kind without invading the prerogative of Heaven ? There are natural rights which belong to men, *as men*, and of which they ought not to be deprived, if there were no civil government. Civil government is then only conducive to general happiness, when it protects men in the enjoyment of their natural rights ; such as their right to their lives, their limbs, their liberty, the fruit of their labour, and to the use, in common with others,

others, of air, light, and water*.——If you are more powerful than your neighbour, does power authorise you to deprive him of his rights? If you admit this—what do you do?—You destroy the evident distinction between power and right, and justify the ruffian who deprives you of your property, and the assassin who plunges the fatal dagger in the bosom of your friend. But upon what other principle can the Slave Trade be defended?

That men may forfeit their liberty by their crimes cannot be denied: but in Africa wars are often excited to enslave and trade the persons of men who have NOT forfeited their natural rights. ‘I verily believe (saith Mr. Newton, a very intelligent, impartial and pious writer, who was once engaged in the Slave Trade, but of which he now repents), ‘I verily believe that the far greater part of the wars in Africa would cease, if the Europeans would cease to tempt them by

* See Blackstone’s Commentaries on the Laws of England, Book I. Chap. i. Paley’s Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, B. II. C. x.

offering goods for slaves.' For 'supposing the Negroes wish for European goods, may not they wish to purchase them from a ship just arrived? Of course they must wish for slaves to go to market with; and if they have not slaves, and think themselves strong enough to invade their neighbours, they will probably wish for war. And if once they wish for it, how easy is it to find, or make, pretexts for breaking an inconvenient peace; or (after the example of greater heroes, of christian name) to make depredations without condescending to assign any reasons*!' In these wars, it is supposed, more are slain than saved; and if, upon a moderate calculation, A HUNDRED THOUSAND SLAVES are annually exported from Africa, how great must be the number of those who are killed in battle! How affecting the thought! The earth is an aceldama, and garments roll in blood.

They who are not slain in the field of

* Mr. Newton's Thoughts on the African Slave Trade, p. 29, 30.

war, but taken captive by the conqueror, are reserved for more tragic scenes. They experience miseries beyond miseries, in dreadful progression.—When brought to the factories they are stripped, examined and marked.—When conducted to the ships, they are chained two and two; and great numbers are stowed together in the holds of the ships, like goods of burden. It is no uncommon thing to see the living and the dead chained together; for it is supposed that, at least, one fourth die on board in the course of their voyage. Those who live to reach their destined port in the colonies, are again stripped, and again examined. After which a still more melancholy scene arises—friends and relatives must part, never more to meet.

Here you behold daughters clinging to their mothers, and mothers to their daughters, in all the agonies of grief, bedewing each other with their tears, and pouring out their unavailing sorrows.—There you see father, mother, and children, locked in each others arms, praying never to be separated. Here the husband and the wife,

in the most suppliant manner, earnestly entreat not to be torn asunder. There are others still weeping for their native shore, and for their endearing connexions whom they have left behind.

When sold and consigned to those who purchase them, the most heart-piercing scene arises. See the husband and the wife, clasping their fond offspring in their arms, and with the most parental tenderness taking their final leave. But on this occasion they are not permitted to continue long. If unwilling to depart, the flogger is called in, and then, in spite of themselves, in spite of nature, they must separate during the course of a wretched, but short life. For cruel fare, hard labour, bloody chastisements, and dejection of mind generally put a speedy termination to their miserable existence.

Thus the poor Negroes are bought like cattle, they are treated as cattle, and sometimes put to death in the most brutal manner. It is well known in this metropolis, that more than one hundred slaves were thrown into the sea, at one time

time, from on board a ship, when fresh water was scarce; to fix the loss upon the underwriters, which otherwise, had they died on board, must have fallen upon the owners of the vessel.

Thus the dignity of man is degraded by the treatment which the Africans receive. Thus we see human nature vilified, and brought down to a level with the brute creation! And can we see humanity insulted, and not feel an indignant spirit?

Did not the laws of decency forbid to mention the shameful manner in which the African women are treated, indignation would fire every female breast; and if females only were to contribute, on this occasion, a liberal collection would be raised. But carefully concealing every circumstance which would raise the virtuous blush, we will mention one anecdote recorded by Mr. Newton*: ‘A mate of a ship, in a long-boat, purchased a young woman with a fine child, of about a year old, in her arms. In the

night, the child cried much, and disturbed his sleep. He rose up in great anger, and swore, that if the child did not cease making such a noise, he would presently silence it. The child continued to cry. At length he rose up a second time, tore the child from the mother, and threw it into the sea. The child was soon silenced indeed, but it was not so easy to pacify the woman: she was too valuable to be thrown overboard, and he was obliged to bear the sound of her lamentations till he could put her on board his ship.' Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Ye affectionate mothers, when you feast your eyes on your little infants in your arms, think of this story: and if you CAN, justify the practice of trading the persons of men.

II. You are BRITONS.

You *love* liberty. Is it possible to be a Briton, and not love liberty? or, is it possible to love liberty, and not wish to extend its mild and gentle influence?

‘ Shall

‘ Shall slavery be countenanced by a people, who are animated with that heroic passion, the love of liberty, beyond all nations ancient or modern ; and the fame of whose toilsome but unwearied perseverance, in vindicating, at the expence of life and fortune, the sacred rights of mankind, will strike terror into the hearts of sycophants and tyrants, and excite the admiration and gratitude of all good men to the latest posterity* ?

You are Britons, and *enjoy* liberty. Your natural rights are secured by the incomparable constitution of your country. Magna Charta, the Petition of Rights, the Bill of Rights, and the Coronation Oath, are bulwarks of English liberty. Here, in this happy country, under the auspices of liberty, genius has its most ample play, and conscience enjoys great freedom ; the tongue dares reveal the dictates of the mind and the feelings of the heart ; and life and property are inviolably secured. The spirit of our

* Dr. Beattie’s Essay on Truth, p. 464.

constitution is so inimical to slavery, that to breathe British air is to be free. The moment the poor Negroe treads on the English shore his fetters drop, the yoke of slavery is broken, and he who was a *slave*, is *free*, and the laws of our country will protect his person and property.

Here, service is, as it should every where be, voluntary and by contract. The authority of the master extends no farther than the terms or equitable construction of the contract will justify. An obligation to labor for the benefit of the master without the contract or consent of the servant, is unknown in England. Here, the lowest classes of society are free, and equally with the highest ranks, are protected by the law. The English peasant, who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow, may delight himself with the ennobling thought that he was FREE BORN. He lives in his native country, and in the midst of friends—his wife and children are not torn from him, and sent to a distant part—he is not confined to unreasonable, unjust, and oppressive

five

five masters—he knows that he can never be sold as a beast, that he cannot be even stricken with impunity, and that his children after him will be free.

‘ Surely,’ may we all say, ‘ the lines are fallen to us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly heritage.’ Why are we not now taking our farewell, our last farewell, of our dearest friends, and most affectionate relatives? Why are we not now rattling our chains? Why are we not confined under the hatches of a ship, with many other miserable captives? Or, why are we not writhing under the heavy lashes of a cruel driver? O thou adorable Being! it is to thy goodness we owe our liberty! and shall we never pity those who are doomed to slavery? Forbid it, O thou common Parent of mankind!

We have been lately celebrating the auspicious æra of the GLORIOUS REVOLUTION, when the royal diadem was taken from the head of an arbitrary Prince, and the Patrons of liberty elevated to the throne: and shall we be tenacious of liberty at home, and rule with

the iron rod of slavery abroad ? How inconsistent ! How preposterous !

You are Britons, and celebrated for your generosity. What country under Heaven can boast so many public charities as abound in this favored isle ? Every species of distress finds relief in the benevolence of our countrymen. And shall the most generous people upon earth countenance the sufferings of the Africans ? Shall they sully the lustre of their virtues at home, by their vices abroad ? It is true we do not witness the various and complicated distresses of the poor Negroes : our midnight slumbers are not disturbed by their heart-piercing groans : our public walks are not embittered by the sight of these miserable objects : but their wretchedness is not less real, because we see it not. No. While you fare *sumptuously every day*, thousands and thousands of your unhappy brethren are groaning under all the agonies of woe, to furnish your tables with the luxuries of life.

You are Britons, and should feel concern for the *loss of seamen* who are destroyed

stroyed by this inhuman traffic. It is computed that no less than sixteen hundred annually die, through the concurrence of various unfavourable circumstances*.

Once more: You are Britons, and should be concerned for the *prosperity of your country*, which is intimately connected with national virtue—"If there be a God, and that there is all nature cries aloud through all her works"—if he be the ruler over nations—if *the sceptre of his kingdom be a right sceptre*—if a nation be considered, in a moral light, as a person, consisting of a body, soul, and duration of life—and if there be no future œconomy in which a nation, as such, will be rewarded or punished, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that national sins are punished, in this world, by national judgments. And upon this principle have we no reason to tremble? We have seen the vices and destruction of Tyre, and if similar causes produce similar effects, where are we?—If the Sovereign Lord of all regard

* Newton, p. 13.

the cry of the prisoner, the voice of the captive, the lamentation of human misery : if he avenge the blood of his servants : if he say O earth, earth, earth, cover not their blood : if their blood cry to Heaven for vengeance upon this nation : and if their blood be required of us—O ENGLAND ! ENGLAND ! words are wanting to describe the horrors of thy doom !——*But I hope better things, though I thus speak.* The spirit of the nation is roused ; and Parliamentary wisdom will be soon employed in devising means to redress the miserable : this, I trust, through the blessing of God, will prove a lengthening to our national tranquillity.

III. Finally : You are CHRISTIANS, and, as such, cannot consistently justify the Slave Trade *. Consider the *commands* you are to obey ; the *example* you are to imitate ; the *genius* of the *religion* you profess, and the *prospect* which is opened to your view.

* See Mr. Robinson's Sermon on this subject, intitled, "*Slavery inconsistent with the Spirit of Christianity.*"

Con-

Consider the *commands* you are to obey. The royal law, the great leading maxim of the Gospel, requires you to do to others as you would have them do to you. Are you free? Are you willing to be deprived of your natural rights? Would you leave your native country, and submit to the lash of cruel task-masters? Then why should that liberty be taken from others, of which you are justly tenacious? The precepts which are addressed to masters breathe the most liberal spirit*. *Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal: knowing that you also have a master in Heaven, neither is there respect of persons with him†. For he has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon the face of the earth‡.*

You are called to follow the *example* of Jesus Christ, who came down from Heaven to *proclaim liberty to captives* §, to deliver them from the tyranny of Satan, the dominion of the law, and the empire

* Col. iv. 1. † Eph. vi. 9. ‡ Acts xvii. 26.

§ Isai. lxi. 1.

of vice. In the person of our great Redeemer benevolence was the most prominent feature; and in his life, the most pure, active, and extensive benevolence was displayed. And how can we better exemplify his virtues than by endeavouring to 'do good to all men?' I would consider the example of primitive christians respecting slaves, if I were not afraid of being tedious*.

Consider the *genius* of your *religion*; a religion calculated to inspire universal benevolence, by teaching us that all mankind are our Brethren; that they stand in

* That the primitive Christians were at great expence in actually liberating Christian slaves, and even in procuring liberty to enemies, is an undoubted fact. ACACIUS, bishop of Amida, with the consent of the clergy of his church, caused all the gold and silver plate and vessels of their church to be melted down and sold, to redeem seven thousand *Persians* who were taken captive by the *Roman* army. The good bishop, having set them free, generously fed them, gave them money, and sent them to their prince, who, charmed with this noble instance of generosity, desired to see the bishop; and this interview procured peace between the contending powers. *Cave's Prim. Christ.* P. III. C. ii. p. 392. *Encyc. Brit.* (Acacius.)

the same common relation to God, the universal Parent ; and are all equally designed for another state of existence. Christianity is not like Judaism, confined to one nation, and circumscribed by local ceremonies ; but it is designed for general reception ; it is calculated for general utility ; and it will, in time, obtain general acceptation. ‘ The kingdoms of this world’ will all ‘ become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.’ Then ‘ Ethiopia’ will again ‘ stretch out her hands unto God.’ But can we hope that this transporting period will come till the Slave Trade is abolished ? Is it probable that the poor Negroes will cordially embrace Christianity while they view it, in such a horrid light, in the lives of professed Christians ? They cannot read our books, in which genuine Christianity is displayed : but they read the lives of many who assume the venerable Christian name.---Action is an universal language, intelligible to all mankind. And how is Christianity disgraced by the actions of

those, in whom the practice of trading the persons of men has weakened the moral principle, and destroyed every humane affection! What ideas must the Negroes form of that system of religion which, they naturally suppose, tolerates barbarity?

Finally; realize the awful scenes which will be soon exhibited, when ‘ every ‘ bond man and every free man’ will stand together at the bar of God.—Then all local and civil distinctions will be done away; the Slave will be as distinguished as his Lord; no respect will be paid to persons: but all will be impartially ‘ judged ‘ according to their works, whether they ‘ have been good or evil.’ May the prospect of the great judgment-day induce us to shew mercy to the miserable! lest Jesus Christ then say unto us, ‘ I was an hungred, and ‘ ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ‘ ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, ‘ and ye took me not in: naked, and ye ‘ clothed me not: sick, and in prison, ‘ and ye visited me not—For verily I say ‘ unto

‘ unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not
 ‘ to one of the least of these, ye did it
 ‘ not to me*.’

I have trespassed upon your time, and fear I have exhausted your patience, and will therefore conclude, by observing, that for some years past those of our fellow Christians who are denominated Friends, but more commonly Quakers, have taken the African Slave Trade into their serious and deliberate consideration ; that, penetrated with the horrors of trading the persons of men, they have set their own slaves at liberty ; that some of them employ their old slaves as day-labourers, and pay them their just wages ; that the masters find their account in it, as their farms answer better than before ; and that, with a view to induce all Slave-holders to treat their slaves with humanity, a ‘ Society’ has been formed ‘ for effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade.’ The Committee, for this purpose, having been already at considerable expence in examining various witnesses, and in printing and dispersing

* Matt. xxv. 42, 43, 45.

many tracts upon the subject; and foreseeing that a further heavy expence will be incurred, in supporting the application to Parliament, in the course of which it will be necessary to produce a variety of evidence; they earnestly and respectfully solicit the assistance of ‘every well-wisher to the abolition of this traffic.’—Some of our churches in the country have already made collections for this purpose, and other churches will, no doubt, follow their example*.——May the benevolent purposes of the Committee be crowned with success! Had I a voice that

* The Elders, Ministers, and Messengers of the several Baptist Churches, who met in association at Portsmouth Common, May 14th and 15th, 1788, came to the following resolution, ‘Agreed, as an Association, thus publicly to express our deepest abhorrence of the SLAVE TRADE, and to recommend it earnestly to the Ministers and Members of all our Churches, to unite in promoting, to the utmost of their power, every scheme, that is or may be proposed, to procure the ABOLITION of a traffic so unjust, inhuman, and disgraceful; and the continuance of which tends to counteract and destroy the operation of the benevolent principles and spirit of our common Christianity.’

would

would reach from pole to pole, I would
 found forth the praises of those who first
 engaged in the excellent work of setting
 captives free ; I would exert my utmost
 endeavours to recommend their example ;
 and say to every Slave-holder, in the
 language of my divine Master, GO,
 AND DO THOU LIKEWISE.

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